UK Health Security Agency

Diarrhoea and vomiting (D&V) outbreak pack for education and childcare settings

The following guidance aims to help you manage an outbreak of D&V in a school or nursery environment. The principles are effective at limiting the spread of viral and bacterial infections, including norovirus. It has been produced with reference to national guidance, entitled 'Health Protection in children and young people settings, including education' and can be found here Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK

Contents

The guidance consists of the following sections:

1. Summary
   General principles for effective control of diarrhoea & vomiting outbreaks

2. Action Card 1
   Key actions for the Head Teacher or Administrator to manage the outbreak.

3. Action Card 2
   Key actions for caretakers and staff who will be undertaking cleaning, which is a vital step to reduce the spread of infection.

4. Action Card 3
   Information to be provided to the Health Protection Team to help them give appropriate advice to manage the outbreak.

5. Links to the chapters of the national guidance - Health Protection in schools and other childcare facilities. This includes the exclusion table and posters.

6. Handwashing posters (general and for young children)

Summary for Norovirus Outbreaks	
Transmission Route	Person to person by the faecal oral route, from aerosols of projectile vomit and from environmental contamination.
Incubation Period	12 to 48 hours (length of time from acquiring the infection to developing symptoms).
Exclusion	Exclude the infected individual until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped and they are well enough to return.
Closures	It is not necessary to close the school, unless there are operational reasons such as significant staff absence, which would be a decision for the school in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority.
Recommendations for action	
Hand Hygiene	• Children should be supervised and encouraged to wash their hands before eating and drinking and after going to the toilet. • Hand washing with liquid soap and warm water. • Paper towels should be used for drying hands and a wastepaper bin provided for disposal. • Alcohol gel is not effective against norovirus, but it can be used in addition to soap and water. • Everyone should wash their hands-on arrival at school and before leaving. • Sand, play dough and water play activities should be suspended for the duration of the outbreak.

Cleaning and disinfection	• Ensure the school surfaces are thoroughly cleaned daily using warm water and detergent.
	• All eating surfaces and toilet areas should be disinfected after cleaning twice daily using a hypochlorite solution 1,000 parts per million (such as Milton Solution)
	• It is recommended that toilets are cleaned at least twice a day and their condition monitored during the day, with a view to an extra clean if required.
	• Always wear disposable apron and gloves when cleaning. Dispose after use and wash hands as above.
	• The areas that should be cleaned and then disinfected should include:
	  ○ All areas of the toilet including rims, seats, and handles
	  ○ Wash basins and taps

	○ Door handles and light switches ○ All frequently touched equipment ○ Frequently handled items such as telephones and computer keyboards ○ Carpeted areas and soft furnishings should be cleaned as normal, preferably with a carpet shampoo rather than a vacuum cleaner (hypochlorite will bleach carpets and soft furnishings)
Public spillage incident	When spillages of vomit or diarrhoea occur: • Cover the excreta/vomit spillages immediately with disposable paper towels. • Always wear a disposable apron and gloves when disposing of faeces/vomit. A face mask should be worn if there is a concern about splash contamination to the face. • After removing the spillage, clean the surrounding area with warm soapy water, followed by disinfection with a hypochlorite solution of 1000 parts per million. Always clean a wider area than is visibly contaminated. • Carpets contaminated with faeces or vomit should be cleaned with warm soapy water (or a carpet shampoo) after removal of the spillage with paper towels. This should be followed by steam cleaning if possible. • The area where the incident has occurred should be cleared and ventilated as soon as possible
Food Safety	• Everyone should eat and drink in designated areas (i.e. dining hall or staff room). • Open boxes of chocolates/biscuits and fruit bowls must be removed in an outbreak as they can easily become contaminated. • Food handlers should avoid contact with the school children during an outbreak, in order to avoid contamination of the kitchen or food. • Kitchens MUST have their own separate cleaning equipment.

Further Information can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in children and young people settings, including education [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)]

Action Card 1

Title	**Managing an outbreak of diarrhoea and vomiting in a childcare & educational setting**
Description	Overview of what to do in an outbreak situation.
Who	Those members of staff that are responsible for overseeing/managing an outbreak ie head teacher, administrative staff, absence monitoring manager etc.

Definitions of an outbreak

- An incident in which 2 or more people experiencing a similar illness are linked in time or place *(important for infections where there could be serious outcomes such as meningitis or measles)*
- A greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual background rate for the place and time where the outbreak has occurred *(more applicable for outbreaks of diarrhoea and/or vomiting or respiratory infections)*

NOTE: You do not need to notify the Health Protection Team of all outbreaks of gastro-intestinal (diarrhoea and/or vomiting) infections routinely (see Action card 3)

What you need to do

- Ensure good record keeping – names, dates of birth, symptoms, dates of onset of illness of cases, number and location of episodes of vomiting in communal areas etc in the school.
- Contact UKHSA for advice and guidance (**see Action Card 3** for triggers of when to notify).
- Prompt exclusion/isolation of affected children and staff, ensuring strict compliance with 48 hour exclusion (ie fully recovered for 48 hours before returning to school).
- Consideration should be given to advising parents and visitors about the outbreak – an information sheet with advice is attached to email.
- Remind children about the importance of good hand hygiene.
- Cookery activities for the children as well as sand, playdough and water play activities should be suspended for the duration of the outbreak. All potentially contaminated materials should be discarded and replaced in accordance with your local procedure.
- Ensure robust infection control measures are in place:
  - Cleaning regime in place (see Action Card 2)
  - Guidance for the management of ‘Spillages of vomit or diarrhoea’ are followed (see Action Card 2)
  - Effective hand hygiene (see Summary Sheet)
  - Plentiful supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), liquid soap, paper towels, etc
  - Non-essential visitors should be restricted and/or discouraged from visiting during the outbreak
  - Dispose of all infection-exposed food items from communal areas ie boxes of chocolates, biscuits, or bowls of fruit
- Declare the outbreak over when it has been 48 hours since the resolution of symptoms in last known case
- Terminal clean (Action card 2) to be done as soon as possible after resolution of outbreak

Further Information can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in children and young people settings, including education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities

Action Card 2

Title	**Cleaning and disinfection of the school/nursery environment**
Description	Germs that cause diarrhoea and vomiting will survive in the environment, so to stop the infection spreading it is important that the areas are maintained in a clean condition. Decontamination (cleaning and disinfecting) the areas thoroughly on a frequent basis is necessary.
Who	Those members of staff that are responsible for overseeing/managing an outbreak ie head teacher, administrative staff, absence monitoring manager etc.

The following are terms that you may hear

- **Detergent:** A cleaning agent that helps to remove dirt and grease from surfaces
- **Disinfectant:** A chemical that destroys bacteria.
- **Recommended Disinfectant:** Chlorine-releasing agent/hypochlorite solution (eg bleach or 'Milton' solution 0.1% at 1000ppm). It should be noted chlorine (used for disinfection), cannot be used on urine.
- **Routine cleaning:** A process that physically removes contamination which is done on a regular/daily basis. Warm water and detergent should be used to clean.
- **Disinfection:** A process that reduces the number of germs to a level at which they are not harmful but is only effective if the surfaces and equipment are cleaned thoroughly with detergent and water beforehand.
- **Enhanced cleaning:** During an outbreak, cleaning and disinfection should be done twice daily as a minimum (plus as necessary). Particular attention should be given to frequently touched surfaces, eg door handles, flushes, taps, contact points, switches, mirrors, bins, furniture, stair rails, etc.
- **Deep cleaning:** Intense and enhanced thorough cleaning process – usually planned ahead eg during holiday periods.
- **Terminal cleaning:** Cleaning that takes place at the end of an outbreak to ensure the area has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. This includes the steam cleaning of carpets and soft furnishings.

To clean effectively you will need

- **Equipment:** Clean, disposable, single-use cloths, dedicated mop and bucket (different coloured equipment for different areas is a useful tool), dustpan and brush, clinical waste bags (yellow), spillage kit, paper towels, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), steam cleaner.

Cleaning equipment used by the kitchen staff **must** be kept separate and used solely for kitchen.

- **Chemicals:**
  - Detergent (see above)
  - Disinfectant (see above)
  - Sanitiser – a commercial purchased combination of detergent with disinfectant properties

You must always ensure that you follow your health and safety guidelines when handling chemicals including the use of appropriate PPE

- During an outbreak cleaning and disinfection should be done **twice** daily.

- Warm water and detergent should be used to clean hard surfaces followed by disinfection with a 0.1% hypochlorite solution. Bleach or Milton are the recommended disinfectants (at 1000ppm), as they will kill both bacteria and viruses. It should be noted chlorine used for disinfection cannot be used on urine. If these are unsuitable, a disinfectant that has **both** antibacterial and antiviral properties **must** be used.

- Particular attention should be paid to cleaning and disinfecting toilet seats, toilet flush handles, door handles, washbasin taps, push-plates on doors, light switches, stair handrails and other frequently touched areas.

- Spillages of vomit or diarrhoea should be cordoned off and the area cleared immediately:
  - Wear disposable gloves and apron.
  - Use a spill kit or paper towels to soak up the spillage. Transfer these and any solid matter directly into a clinical waste bag.
  - Clean the soiled area with detergent and hot water, using a disposable cloth. A three-metre area around the spillage should be cleaned.
  - The same area should then be disinfected with the freshly made hypochlorite solution. It should be noted that this solution cannot be used on urine
  - Dispose of gloves, apron, and cloths into the clinical waste bag.

- Wash hands thoroughly using soap and water and dry them with paper towels. Alcohol hand-rub is not a substitute for hand washing after cleaning up a spillage.

- Vacuum cleaning carpets and floor buffing are not recommended during an outbreak.

- Do not use bleach on carpets or soft furnishings – a steam cleaner must be used to remove the bacterial or viral particles.

- Clothing contaminated with body fluids should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and taken home by the child/parent. Do not wash/sluice or soak the contaminated items on behalf of the child/parent.

- Carpets and soft furnishings should be steam-cleaned, or a carpet shampoo used.

Further Information can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in children and young people settings, including education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/preventing-and-controlling-infections

Action Card 3

Title	**Reporting an outbreak of D&V to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) West Midlands health protection team (WM HPT) by telephone or email**
Description	This card gives you the contact details for WM HPT and the information that the HPT will require to help you manage your outbreak.
Who	Those members of staff that are responsible for informing WM HPT of an outbreak ie head teacher, administrative staff.

The general increase in gastrointestinal illness (GI) which occur periodically (which are usually caused by norovirus) can be managed by the school using this guidance.

When to report

Schools should notify the HPT by telephone in the following circumstances:

- Cases of vomiting and diarrhoea associated with a school trip or event.
- If any symptomatic person is hospitalised (admitted overnight) due to illness
- There is a potential food source or a staff member who handles food (e.g. kitchen staff) that is symptomatic.
- Reports of severe illness or bloody diarrhoea
- Increased levels of concern in parents/public/media/school staff

Phone UKHSA on 0344 225 3560, Option 2 or email westmidlands.arc@ukhsa.gov.uk

What UKHSA will ask for

- Name and address of the school, including the postcode.
- Contact person's name and phone number
- Total number of children at the school
- Details of the year groups / classes
- Number of staff at the school
- Number of children affected, which year groups, details of siblings affected.
- Number of staff affected
- Date of onset of first illness (onset date)
- Details of any recent school trips, special events
- Details of any episodes of public vomiting
- Details of school caterers affected
- School lunch / packed lunch ratio
- School layout and facilities, particularly who shares toilets

Further Information can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in children and young people settings, including education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) West Midlands

Gastrointestinal Outbreak Pack for Education and Childcare Settings

National guidance is available on GOV.UK website entitled, 'Health protection in children and young people settings, including education'. The following are links to the individual chapters for ease of reading.

1.	**What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection**	What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
2.	**Prevention and Controlling infections**	Preventing and controlling infections - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
3.	**Supporting immunisation programmes**	Supporting immunisation programmes - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
4.	**Managing outbreaks and incidents**	Managing outbreaks and incidents - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
5.	**Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z**	Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
6.	**Specific settings and populations: additional health protection considerations**	Specific settings and populations: additional health protection considerations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
7.	**Children and young people settings: tools and resources (including exclusion table, posters, checklists)**	Children and young people settings: tools and resources - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

UK Health Security Agency

Best Practice: How to hand wash step by step images

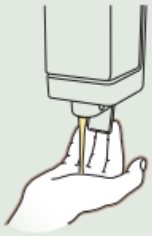
Steps 3-8 should take at least 15 seconds.

1



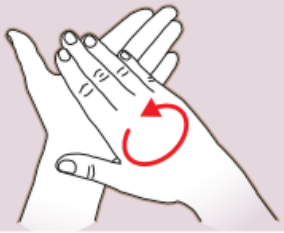
Wet hands with water.

2



Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.

3



Rub hands palm to palm.

4



Right palm over the back of the other hand with interlaced fingers and vice versa.

5



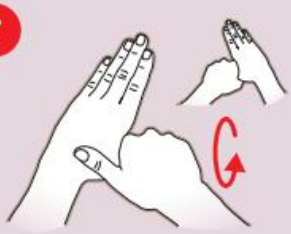
Palm to palm with fingers interlaced.

6



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.

7



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa.

8



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.

9



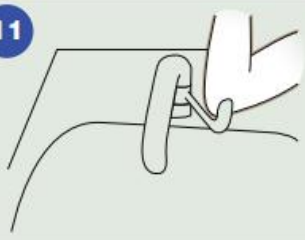
Rinse hands with water.

10



Dry thoroughly with towel.

11



Use elbow to turn off tap.

12

Steps 3-8 should take at least 15 seconds.



... and your hands are safe*.

Adapted from the World Health Organization/Health Protection Scotland

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*Any skin complaints should be referred to local occupational health or GP.

UKHSA handwashing advice

